

CLAIMS

1. A floating water deicer for maintaining an opening in a body of water that would otherwise freeze over with ice, comprising:

a buoyant support member, the support member being adapted to float at or near the water's surface;

a water pump having an inlet and an outlet, the pump being adapted to draw water in through the inlet and expel it through the outlet, the pump being carried by the support member such that the pump's outlet is located at or near the water's surface, and

a heater carried by the support member, the heater being constructed and positioned to deliver heat to the body of water at or near the water's surface,

wherein the combination of the heater and the pumped water is adapted to maintain an opening in the water's surface that would otherwise freeze over with ice.

2. The floating water deicer of claim 1, further comprising a fluid conduit extending downwardly from the pump's inlet for drawing water into the pump from a location below the water's surface.

3. The floating water deicer of claim 1, wherein the support member comprises a ring-shaped member having an outer diameter, an inner diameter, and a center opening.

4. The floating water deicer of claim 3, wherein the heating element comprises an electric wire heater that extends around a portion of the ring-shaped member.

5. The floating water deicer of claim 4, further comprising a foil covering the heater.

6. The floating water deicer of claim 3, wherein the pump is disposed within the center opening of the ring-shaped member.

7. A floating water deicer for maintaining an opening in a body of water that would otherwise freeze over with ice, comprising:

a buoyant float;

a water pump having an inlet and an outlet, the pump being suspended below the float such that the pump's inlet is positioned a substantial distance below the water's surface;

a fluid conduit extending between the pumps outlet and a location at or near the water's surface such that water expelled through pump's outlet is discharged at or near the water's surface; and

a heater carried by the float, the heater being constructed and positioned to deliver heat to the body of water at or near the water's surface,

wherein the combination of the heater and the pumped water functions to maintain an opening the water's surface that would otherwise freeze over with ice.

8. The floating deicer of claim 7, wherein the pump is supported below the float.

9. The floating deicer of claim 7, wherein the float comprises a ring-shaped member having an outer diameter, an inner diameter, and a center opening.

10. The floating deicer of claim 9, wherein the heater comprises an electric wire heater that extends around a portion of the ring-shaped member.

11. The floating deicer of claim 10, further comprising a foil covering the heater.

12. The floating deicer of claim 9, wherein the pump is disposed within the center opening of the ring-shaped member.

13. A deicer for maintaining an opening in a body of water that would otherwise freeze over with ice, comprising:

a heater configured to be disposed near a surface of the water, said heater substantially surrounding the opening in the body of water, and said heater being adapted to heat at least a portion of the water within the opening; and

a pump having an inlet and an outlet positioned below said heater, said pump being configured to be submerged within the water, and said pump being adapted to pump water below the surface into the opening.

14. The deicer of claim 13, further comprising:

a flotation ring proximate said heater;

a pump mounting bracket that securely retains said pump below said heater and said flotation ring; and

a cover, wherein said heater and said flotation ring are sandwiched between said pump mounting bracket and said cover.

15. The deicer of claim 13, further comprising a fluid conduit extending downwardly from the pump's inlet for drawing water into the pump from a location below the water's surface.

16. The deicer of claim 14, wherein the flotation ring comprises a main body having an outer diameter, an inner diameter, and a center opening.

17. The deicer of claim 16, wherein the heater comprises an electric wire heater that extends around a portion of the flotation ring.

18. The deicer of claim 16, further comprising foil covering the heater.

19. A method of maintaining an opening in a body of water that would otherwise freeze over with ice, comprising:

disposing a heater within a deicer;

heating water positioned within an opening of the deicer with the heater; and

pumping water below a surface of the water into the opening.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising disposing a flotation ring within a cavity of the heater.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein said disposing includes substantially surrounding the opening with the heater.

22. The method of claim 19, further comprising disposing a pump, which is configured to pump water, beneath the heater.